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# Postcolonial Linguistics : The Editor s Guide to

Levisen, Carsten

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# POSTCOLONIAL LINGUISTICS THE EDITORS' GUIDE TO A NEW INTERDISCIPLINE

CARSTEN LEVISEN      EEVA SIPPOLA <sup>1</sup>  
*Roskilde University      University of Helsinki*

**1. INTRODUCTION.** The launching of a new journal is a very special event. Like when tectonic plates rumble for a while to make room for a new island in the ocean, the world of research keeps creating new ideas, some of which surface and take material shape in the form of new conferences, associations, and journals. The new *Journal of Postcolonial Linguistics* is a sign of academic tectonics in action. It is a sign that the community of researchers for whom postcolonial linguistics matters has grown and matured. It has become increasingly clear that the study of postcolonial linguistics needs a journal of its own, in which the study of language in postcolonial contexts and the postcolonial study of linguistics can be integrated and explored in new ways.

In the wake of the diversity turn in linguistics and the changing nature of analysis-making and theorizing in the globalizing world, we believe that it is the right time to launch a journal that publishes works on language in postcolonial contexts and on postcolonial approaches to the study of language. At this stage, no-one can predict exactly how the field of postcolonial linguistics will change the landscape of research, and this is one of the main reasons why *Journal of Postcolonial Linguistics* is needed. It offers itself as a new forum in which the directions of the field can be observed, shaped, and discussed.

Fields such as contact linguistics, linguistic anthropology, diversity linguistics, critical sociolinguistics, and more specialized studies in language ideologies, language hegemonies, language revitalisation, the politics of language, the study of colonial and missionary linguistics have already to some degree engaged with coloniality and postcoloniality in relation to language studies, but the field of postcolonial linguistics centres on these issues and brings these key themes together. From the central discussions in theoretical linguistics to descriptive linguistics and sociolinguistics, there is a need and a demand for linguists to rethink how we conceptualize, study, and analyse language in a postcolonial world. Also, an 'applied postcolonial linguistics' has much to offer in education and language pedagogy, language and the law, dictionary making, translation studies, and social media studies.

This introduction to the first issue of *Journal of Postcolonial Linguistics* has three primary aims. Firstly, to provide a short guide for newcomers to the field, by way of introducing some central themes, questions, and frames of understanding that the juxtaposition of 'postcolonial' with 'linguistics' offers. Secondly, it invites researchers of a variety of backgrounds and theoretical persuasions to contribute to the development of postcolonial linguistics. And finally, it introduces the position papers of this first issue written by scholars who have all contributed to the development of postcolonial linguistics.

**2. WHAT IS POSTCOLONIAL LINGUISTICS?** International linguistics, as we know it today, was born in the Global North. It was made in Paris, Geneva, Prague, Graz, London, Chicago,

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<sup>1</sup> We would like to thank the reviewer of this article, Hartmut Haberland, for valuable comments and suggestions.

Boston, and Berkeley. In the future, global linguistics might increasingly grow out from Kinshasa, Lagos, Manila, Shanghai, São Paulo and Buenos Aires, and other major academic centres of the South. The way in which Northern and Southern linguistics prioritize and organize studies in language and linguistic practices is likely to differ. Consequently, how we compare, contrast, analyse, and theorize might all be up for a reconceptualization. This does not confine ‘Northern’ linguists to a passive role and does not make them step aside. Quite the contrary, it causes them to critically engage with both their own analytical traditions and their alternatives, and to reflect on the practices of Northern linguistics. What is needed, first and foremost, is an increased North-South collaboration, the forging of new intercultural research, and the opportunity to discuss the concepts, methods, and interpretative practices that linguistics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should be based on.

The aim that binds together postcolonial linguistics forms a double commitment: to study language and linguistic practices in postcolonial contexts and to engage critically with the way in which we do linguistics. Some studies will emphasise the first agenda, and others the second, and most will have something to say about both. In other words, how ‘decolonial’ a postcolonial linguist tends to correspond to how much the second aim is emphasised. For example, Ingo Warnke, who coined the term POSTCOLONIAL LANGUAGE STUDIES, offers with his very terminology a space for language studies within postcolonial studies and a focus on how language is and was integral to the colonial matrix of power and the orders of knowledge in the postcolonial era (Warnke 2017). Eric Anchimbe (2018:xiii), by contrast, writes in the foreword to his latest book on postcolonial pragmatics:

I do not define the postcolonial in line with postcolonial theory as developed in literary and cultural studies where it depicts an awareness of, and movement towards, consciously challenging (de)colonisation and the power echelons that it engendered. .... I have used the term ‘postcolonial’ as an era, time-defining concept. This is consistent with its use in the theoretical framework postcolonial pragmatics.

These different positions reflect the broad spectrum in postcolonial-linguistic scholarship. The descriptive-causal and the critical-reflective understanding of ‘postcolonial’ keep the field open. Language and discourse scholars of many persuasions can contribute to postcolonial linguistics working within the paradigms that they feel most comfortable with, theoretically and personally. But the discussion also suggests that the ‘decolonial’ agenda can take many different forms. For example, the diversity turn in linguistics might not have had an explicit decolonial agenda. Nevertheless, the interest in trying to understand human language in its fullest, broadest, and most inclusive sense is a stance against ‘Eurocentrism’. A more explicitly critical term for the scrutiny of European categories in global linguistics is ‘cross-linguistic confrontation’ (Leezenberg et al. 2003:7). In other words, postcolonial linguistics has a certain iconoclastic potential: the aim is not to protect linguistics as we know it but rather to transform or reinvent it. Postcolonial linguists should care to discuss the most sacred truisms of modern linguistics and question the logics that have organized ‘the centre’ and ‘the periphery’—and the spaces in between. At the same time, there is also an evident humility associated with being a postcolonial linguist: the goal is not to convert other scholars into becoming postcolonial but rather to engage scholars in

various subdisciplines to provide new venues for interacting about important topics that for various reasons have been left aside or overlooked.

While the term 'postcolonial' has been around for several decades, and 'linguistics' even longer, there has been astonishingly little intersection work. Exact motivations for this divide are difficult to pinpoint, but 'the epistemological walls' called post/structuralism and post/modernism are likely to be invoked in attempts to explain the delay in this encounter. To many linguists, the word 'postcolonial' suggests 'literature', and for several years, many quarters of linguistics have tried to—somewhat artificially—maximise the gap between the study of language and literature. By contrast, postcolonial linguists have sought to revive the language-literature conversations and to create new cross-fertilizations<sup>2</sup> (see e.g. Schubert & Volkmann 2016). It is important to bear in mind that postcolonial linguistics does not only have relevance for the study of language situations in formerly colonized countries, cities, and territories. Linguistic and cultural colonialism do not necessarily follow the same trajectories as formal political colonization and decolonization. Postcolonial linguistics has much offer in places where full political decolonization has not yet taken place, such as in the case of Greenland, and in Danish-Greenlandic relations. Also, it would be a mistake to exclude language situations in China, Ethiopia, and other so-called non-colonized countries in the world from the study, given that political colonization is not a prerequisite for cultural and conceptual colonization. Finally, the linguacultures of (former) European colonizer nations are in themselves important to study: the words, meanings, grammars and discourses that afford both decolonial ways of thinking and speaking, along with (neo)colonial tropes of thought and speech.

**3. IDEAS AND DEVELOPMENTS.** Linguistics is known for its many 'hyphens', and its ability to build bridges to neighbouring disciplines. Consider for instance, the developments of sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and cognitive linguistics, all of which are now household brands within the discipline, linking linguistics with sociology, psychology, and cognitive science. In the same way, we can think of postcolonial linguistics as a new research agenda that brings together studies in language and postcolonial and decolonial studies. While the hyphens stand for interdisciplinary bridge-building, they have, unfortunately, also led to a compartmentalization of linguistics, where subdisciplines have become sealed boxes. As postcolonial linguists, we are interested in creating and enhancing communication and dialogue between subdisciplines. Postcolonial linguistics has a strong impulse go meta, daring to ask critical questions about linguistics as a discipline and to carefully consider questions about representation, biases in interpretations, and to value scrutiny, nuance, and reflection. Thus, the scope of postcolonial linguistics is broad, and as such it includes the social, psychological, and cognitive 'hyphenations'.

Like in any other interdiscipline, new model studies, new theories, and theorist are emerging to supplement the theorists of the disciplines. This means that great language scholars such as Jakobson, Sapir, Whorf, Wittgenstein, Hymes, or Schegloff, and

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<sup>2</sup> The Bremen conferences on 'Language and Literature in Colonial and Postcolonial Contexts' have been instrumental in rediscovering and rethinking these links (Schmidt-Brücken et al. 2016).

postcolonial and decolonial scholars such as Mignolo, Quijano, Spivak, wa Thiong'o, Said, and Bhabha might continue to inspire the field, but without defining it. Postcolonial linguistics is still emerging, and it would be too early to write down any authoritative or comprehensive history of its emergence. Nevertheless, we have tried to summarize some of the ideas that are currently being discussed in the postcolonial linguistics community.

The seminal works by Calvet ([1974] 2002, 1987) and Errington (2001, 2008) represent a historiographic account of the relationships between linguistics and colonialism. Calvet's *Linguistique et colonialisme. Petit traité de glottophagie* from 1974, his *Guerre de Langue et les politiques linguistiques* from 1987, and Errington's *Linguistics in a Colonial World* from 2008 might already be seen as classic texts that helped to bring about a 'colonial linguistics' which in turn opened up the field of 'postcolonial linguistics'. Joseph Errington (2008:1) memorably wrote:

[...] some scholars have colonialism on their minds because they recognize that it might be in our mind in the guise of durable categories and ideas which emerged then [in colonial times] but still serve now as common sense for thinking about human diversity and inequality.

These durable categories, established in colonial times, are to a large extent what postcolonial linguistics today revolves around and revolts against.

Rich in examples from French colonialism and the Francophone world, Calvet's studies ([1974] 2002) of the ideologies of linguistic superiority, empirical pretension, and Eurocentrism established a new discourse that to some degree was at odds with liberal dogmas of modern sociolinguistics. The warfare metaphors in Calvet were indeed unusually confrontational seen from the perspective of Anglo-international sociolinguistics at the time. When Calvet's work *Language Wars and Linguistic Politics* was finally translated into English in 1998, the American linguist Nancy Dorian (1999) issued a warning against it, arguing that its conflictual focus and its colonially defined views on language empires could be detrimental to the advancements of peaceful multilingualism (on language empires, see also Stolz 2015). But the understanding that neither colonial languages nor the discipline of linguistics should be viewed as innocent but rather as constitutive of a global-historical hierarchical order began to gain traction and form the basis for studies in postcolonial linguistics.

More recently, a range of linguistic subdisciplines have been inspired by adopting a postcolonial perspective. The field of the HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE LINGUISTICS has developed new critical reflections on the linguistic past, and topics relevant for postcolonial linguistics have been dealt with in several areas (Storch, this issue, Warnke, this issue). On the one hand, modern DOCUMENTARY AND DESCRIPTIVE LINGUISTICS add to our understanding of the world's linguistic diversity and what threatens it (e.g. Himmelmann 1998, Krauss 1992, Nettle & Romaine 2000), including also critical voices and perspectives (e.g. Dobrin et. al 2007, Kamusella 2012). More applied projects have focused on the fight against LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT AND THE REVITALIZATION of indigenous languages, also in the light of decolonial and collaborative methods that put the roles of the linguist and the speaker and their relationship under debate (e.g. Rice 2006, Smith 2001, Yamada 2007).

Anglo-International PRAGMATICS, the study of language in context, was for a long time a bastion of universalist theories of language use, sometimes talked about as UP – analogous to UG, Chomsky's universal grammar (for a critique, see Goddard 2006). Ameka & Terkourafi (2019:72) summarizes the situation in the following way:

To date, pragmatic theory and practice have largely drawn on theories and models based on observations of communicative practices in the West and tacitly treated as culturally neutral, while patterns of language use in non-Western communities have been used as testing grounds for Western usage rules and their assumed motivations.

The universality of speech acts, maxims, and communicative principles have increasingly come under criticism, especially for their individualist, liberal orientation, in which speakers are free standing individuals who 'do things with words' (Goddard & Ye 2015, Leezenberg 2010, Levisen & Waters 2017). To be fair, it should be said that 'continental pragmatics', and leading scholars associated with *Journal of Pragmatics* were critical of universals very early on in the development of international pragmatics (cf. the work of Mey, Haberland, Coulmas, and Verschuren)<sup>3</sup>. An important move in the de-Anglicization of pragmatics, was initiated by the works of Japanese and Chinese pragmaticists (notably Ide 1989, Matsumoto 1988, Mao 1994, see also Ye's work on 'the politeness bias' (2019). Within this general diversification of pragmatics, Postcolonial Pragmatics took form as an approach first conceptualized by Janney (2009) and Anchimbe & Janney (2011) (see also Anchimbe 2018, Schubert & Volkmann 2016). Postcolonial pragmaticists have continued to criticize the foundations of 'Anglo' pragmatics—some taking more radical epistemic breaks than others from traditional pragmatics. Anchimbe's (2018) studies on West African pragmatics (see also Ameka 2009) have been particularly insightful in their emphasis on the plurilingual norms of communication in postcolonial contexts and in building a bridge between postcolonial pragmatics and postcolonial sociolinguistics.

The story of SEMANTICS, the study of lexical and grammatical meaning, runs somewhat parallel to the developments in postcolonial pragmatics. Anna Wierzbicka's spirited critique of Anglocentrism (see e.g. 2013) stands out in the world of semantic scholarship. Having explored in great details the culture-specificity of 'Anglo' semantics (2006, 2010) viz-a-viz the semantics of numerous other linguacultures<sup>4</sup> Wierzbicka's work has documented an unfortunate 'tendency to mistake Anglo English for the human norm' in global discourse (2006:11)—including the discourse of globalizing linguistics. With Cliff Goddard and a number of international colleagues, the NSM research community has produced numerous meaning-focused work on global languages, including words and meanings in indigenous Australia, West Africa, Oceania, the Americas, South East Asia, and the Middle East (for a recent overview, see Goddard 2018). Not surprisingly, it was also from this research group

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<sup>3</sup> 'Universals are unicorns in an impossible world', a panel organized by Mey, Verschueren, Haberland, and Coulmas at the 1983 Tokyo Congress of the *Comité International Permanent des Linguistes* is a manifest example of the scepticism of universals in continental pragmatic scholarship

<sup>4</sup> On the concept of 'linguaculture', see Friedrich (1989) and Risager (2015).

that the explicit idea of a ‘Postcolonial Semantics’ first emerged (Levisen & Jogie 2015, Levisen et al. 2016, Levisen & Priestley 2017). The core ideas in ‘Postcolonial Semantics’ is to study meanings ‘emically’, that is, from the insider perspective, and to break free from Eurocentric and Anglocentric norms of interpretation. The decolonial potential lies partly in a reform of metalinguistic practices, central to which is an analytical commitment to ‘the metasemantic adequacy of all languages’.

Modern SOCIOLINGUISTICS, in which ‘variation’ and ‘variety’ were keywords, was to a large degree born out of British and American societal thinking. Initially, language in postcolonial contexts was not within the scope of sociolinguistics, and ‘Postcolonial Sociolinguistics’ as an explicitly formulated research paradigm is still relatively new on the scene. As a foundational work, we might think of Sinfree Makoni’s paper ‘Sociolinguistics, colonial and postcolonial’ (2011), which focused on ‘colonial and postcolonial African sociolinguistics’ (Makoni 2011:680), building on the highly influential work of Makoni & Pennycook (2007). Central questions revolve around the concept of ‘language’, as well as the ‘social’ and ‘societal’ concepts on which sociolinguistic enquiry is build and based. Studies have explored ‘heteroglossia’ and ‘plurilingualism’ (Faraclas et al. 2010), and theories of ‘linguaging’ and ‘translinguaging’ have become integral to many contemporary ways of doing sociolinguistics (García & Alvis this issue, García & Li 2014). A central paradox remains in how ‘the discursive structuring power of named languages’ can be crucial for decolonisation and the struggle for political self-determination (Saraceni & Jacob 2019:8), while at the same time, affirming a ‘methodological nationalism’ that grew out of a colonial European mindset and continues to hamper progress in both sociolinguistics and societies today (Schneider 2019).

The study of CONTACT LANGUAGES has throughout its history dealt with challenges and exemptions to mainstream linguistics. Pidgin and creole studies have investigated marginal languages that do not fit the tree models of historical linguistics and provide evidence for questions of simplicity and complexity of language (DeGraff 2001, McWhorter 2001). Heated debates around these issues and their significance for the speakers of creole languages have touched upon post- and decolonial matters: who talks, represents, and studies these languages, for whom, where, and how. Also, the power of contact languages as a way of challenging and renewing the ways we understand and construct ‘languages’ has been acknowledged (Makoni & Pennycook 2007). A related question relates to the debates of ‘mixing’ in language contact studies (for an overview, see Mazzoli & Sippola forthcoming). Similarly, the study of WORLD ENGLISHES, the spread and diversification of the English language worldwide, has resulted in a research boom that in turn has led to its own diversifications and debates (e.g. Afendras et al. 1995). One wonders why world Spanishes, world Portugueses, and world Frenches never took off in the same way. Perhaps it testifies to the ideologies of ‘English as *the* Global language’ that has guided research policies, funding opportunities, positions, etc. Nevertheless, one of the off-shots of the study of world Englishes was the research field of ‘Postcolonial English(es)’ (Buschfeld & Kautsch 2017, Schneider 2009), including also the important questions of ‘the politics of English as a world language’ (Mair 2003).

The twin disciplines LINGUISTIC ANTHROPOLOGY and ANTHROPOLOGICAL LINGUISTICS explore linguacultures in integrated ways, that is the beliefs, ideologies, and worldviews of

speakers, as well as social identity formations. Many questions emerging from the linguistic-anthropology interface have profound implications for the study of language in postcolonial contexts. Seminal studies of language ideologies (Irvine & Gal 2000, Kroskrity et al. 1998) form a particularly important contribution that continues to inspire new postcolonially oriented studies (see e.g. Storch 2011 on secret language registers, King & Lanza 2017 on bilingual families, and Sippola et al. 2017 on music). Other important themes include colonial onomastics and toponomastics, (e.g. Bigon 2016, Makoni et al. 2010, Stolz & Warnke 2018), the study of taboo (e.g. Aikhenvald & Storch 2019), language and tourism (e.g. Mietzner & Storch 2019) the discourse of 'othering', the discourse of 'place', and the study of language and popular geopolitics—topics which will all be explored in subsequent issues of the journal.

APPLIED POSTCOLONIAL LINGUISTICS has an enormous potential, which is yet to be fully unlocked. Obvious areas of interest include educational linguistics, and literacy, as well as language policy and planning (Lanza & Woldemariam 2014, Stringer & Faraclas 2000). Issues related to social justice, 'courtroom talk and neo-colonial control' (Eades 2008), land rights (Hutchins 1980, Faraclas et al. 2017), and linguistic scrutiny of legal texts and documents are obviously of great concern to many nations and societies with a colonial past and/or a neo-colonial present. Dictionary-making and lexicography can also be singled out as an important area for future studies, given that dictionaries have been produced in great numbers, pairing European colonial words from English, French, and Spanish with non-European words (see e.g. Levisen 2016). Of all applied areas, translation studies are probably the most advanced seen from a postcolonial linguistic perspective. One reason for that is presumably that the field of translation never lost its ties to literary studies. Bassnett & Trivedi's textbook *Postcolonial Translation: Theory and Practice* (1999) brought postcoloniality into the curriculum of translation studies, for a history of the field (see also Bassnett 2017). In the global circulation of texts, the point made has been made that 'translation changes everything' (Venuti 2013), that is, not only the forms, but the meanings, functions, usages, and contexts of 'the original', which in turn, redefine, and challenge popular beliefs in transference and allow for a 'translator's turn'.

The overview provided here is incomplete and unfinished, and other studies could have been mentioned. Considering the future, it would go against the critical spirit of postcolonial linguistics to make franchises out of all of the existing linguistic sub-disciplines simply by adding the word 'postcolonial' to them. At the same time, it is interesting to reflect on some of the absences in the present overview. One might, for instance, wonder why 'postcolonial psycholinguistics' does not exist, especially taking into account that 'postcolonial psychology' is an established research field (Hook 2012). 'Postcolonial syntax' is not without google hits, but it is clearly marginal on the current scene. Language acquisition literature does not appear to attract 'postcolonial' either, although 'transmission' could be viewed as a central theme in a postcolonial account of intergenerational linguistics (see Lanza 1997 on infant bilingualism). The future of postcolonial linguistics, will, of course, in many ways be formed by the personal research interests of scholars and the collective focus of research groups.



4. THE JOURNAL OF POSTCOLONIAL LINGUISTICS. *The Journal of Postcolonial Linguistics* is associated with the International Association of Colonial and Postcolonial Linguistics (IACPL). Founded at the Bremen conferences on colonial and postcolonial linguistics (editions in 2013, 2014, 2016), the association's support was central for the journal initiative. The journal will focus on publishing special issues, in which a shared theme will be explored by three or more participants, but at the same time we will be open to individual contributions. We invite guest editors to consider the journal as a venue for publishing papers from workshops and conferences. We are open for publications of many different genres, from concept papers to reports, commentaries, and reflections. In terms of the language policy of the journal, the working language will be 'English for practical purposes (EPP)'. As a hallmark of inclusivity and quality, we will accept a variety of academic Englishes and encourage hybrid features, both lexically, grammatically, and stylistically. We also accept special issues written in other languages, provided that guest editors can ensure that all papers are getting double-blind reviewed.

*Journal of Postcolonial Linguistics* aims to publish papers with a global scope. And while 'critical' and 'criticisms' are likely to be on the agenda, we also wish to remain a constructive journal. Let us elaborate briefly on these points:

- A global scope: We particularly welcome analytically innovative contributions that provide new evidence and analyses of understudied linguistic practices and linguacultures in postcolonial contexts, about all areas of the world.
- An experimental scope: We are interested in publishing important insights and analyses that do not fit neatly into the research agendas of linguistics.
- A constructive scope: While some of the topics in postcolonial linguistics can be incredibly dark, given the nature of colonialism (and neo-colonialism), we wish to give space to a postcolonial linguistics which can also be 'a linguistic of hope'.

Writing an autobiography of an emerging field is obviously a difficult—or impossible—task, and as we have seen, the postcolonial themes have developed in different ways across various schools, partly because of the different traditions that these operate within and react to. It is only natural that the research questions differ considerably depending on whether it is the language-context, the language-society, or the language-meaning axis that is explored. There are, however, some common themes that we would like to briefly discuss, in the form of a series of questions that on a general level lend themselves to linguistic enquiries in postcolonial worlds. These are the questions of 'representation', 'voice', 'bias', and 'ethics'.

#### ***Representations in linguistics***

*How do we represent words, constructions, conversations, and contexts in linguistics? What metalanguage is suitable for the study of language and linguistic practices? How does the choice of representational language effect the analysis—e.g. what happens when the language of presentation is English—or one of the other colonial languages, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, German or Danish. How is data represented, transcribed, and transliterated? What alternative metalinguistics can be used in the representation of knowledge and orders of knowledge in a globalizing world?*

***Voices in linguistics***

*Who gets to speak? How are (post)colonial dynamics of power structured and enacted in public discourses of education, politics, and in society in general? Is there such a thing as an 'authentic' voice, and whose voices speak about postcolonial linguistic matters? How is voice and quality of analysis entangled, and who decides what quality means?*

***Biases in linguistics***

*Through which lenses do we study the world and its speakers? How can we escape biases such as Eurocentrism, Anglocentrism, chronocentrism, 'the written language bias', and similar well-documented descriptive and theoretical biases? Is the belief in a bias-free academic important for achieving any progress or is the whole idea dangerously naïve? Does postcolonial linguistics bring about its own biases? Are biases always bad, or could there be such a thing as a 'good bias'?*

***Ethics in linguistics***

*How do we study languages, discourses, and speakers ethically, in an age of transnationalism, urbanization, and linguistic marginalisation. According to what yardsticks should colonialism's ethical flaws be interpreted and understood by contemporary scholarship? What are the ethical challenges of contemporary postcolonial linguistics? What happens when the ontology of different kinds of ethics clashes in a research project? How does the bureaucratisation of 'university ethics' affect the work that linguists do?*

**5. THIS ISSUE.** In this first issue, we have invited scholars who have invested considerable time and effort in rethinking linguistics in postcolonial and decolonial frameworks. From Northern institutions, and with Northern baggage, the contributors build bridges to the South and to Southern theory. Reflecting on the future of postcolonial linguistics, the papers demonstrate how Southern knowledges, at one at the same, can help to deconstruct linguistics and open up new ways of studying language.

ANNE STORCH'S essay takes us beyond the academic discourse, to the mouth of the whale, to the hospitality sphere of the speakers, to the beach where worlds meet. From these vantage points we can see the colonial autobiography of linguistics and the linguist. With 'African linguistics' as a point in case, Storch's evocative essay explores many of the core themes and questions that postcolonial linguistics revolve around: 'funding', 'fieldwork', and the commodification of not only languages but also the so-called 'informant' who 'needs teeth so that we can hear consonant qualities very well'. The essay ends by suggesting that parts of what we know today as linguistics may be ready for retirement.

The U.S. Latinx experience offers explorations to the connections between Latin American theories of decoloniality and translanguaging, through the subaltern racial/ethnic/sexual bodies. Pointing connections to an important body of Latin-American decolonial writings, OFELIA GARCÍA and JORGE ALVIS describe how translanguaging operates as decoloniality of language, as epistemic disobedience, and denounces the

coloniality of power and knowledge. It confronts the coloniality of named languages and bilingualism, multilingualism, and plurilingualism, and offers a way to decolonize them.

With a vantage point in German linguistics, INGO WARNKE sets out to construct a ‘colonial autobiography of linguistics’. Acknowledging that linguistics was never innocent, but a part of the colonial and neo-colonial apparatus and with a parallelism of the forms and transformations of capitalism and linguistics, Warnke explores what he terms ‘late linguistics’ and its “pronounced interest in standardization, patterns, system, and structure”. Exploring Anglo-European linguistics, with its structurations of centre and periphery, its standards and edges, its ‘binge research’ with profound psychological and ecological footprints, Warnke proposes a ‘linguistics of listening’ and a rediscovery of voice, including the researchers’ own voice.

Although different in their themes, approaches, and styles, these three opening essays share a number of points. They all are critical towards the traditional disciplinary concepts and they write from a personal and biographic, even embodied, perspective, challenging the rationalist objectivity of linguistics. Connections between ‘postcolonial’ and ‘decolonial’ are discussed, borderlands and edges of the disciplines are examined, and different ways of producing knowledge are explored.

**6. PARTING REMARKS.** ‘The linguistics of listening’ is likely to change the landscape of research—perhaps radically. Gone are the days when the two labels ‘formal’ and ‘functional’ could account for the basic philosophical differences in linguistics. Different schools, frameworks, and approaches have arrived on the scene, and as the discipline is moving towards increased globalization, this tendency towards non-consensus, contradictions, and theoretical plurality is likely to increase. Gone are the days when the universe of linguistics was small enough for one scholar to overview it. As editors, we tend to think that a more open universe of linguistics is more interesting, even if it means that we lose control of its stretch in space, and even if it means that the traditional centres and peripheries might swap places. But one thing is certain: in such an open-minded and open-ended linguistics, there is a need for more collaboration, and much more discussion and intercultural dialogue.

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Carsten Levisen  
Language, Culture and Cognition  
Roskilde University  
[calev@ruc.dk]

Eeva Sippola  
Department of Languages/Department of  
Culture  
University of Helsinki  
[eeva.sippola@helsinki.fi]